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RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 1527
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 0201
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RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO BRUSSELS BE PRIORITY
RUEHVEN/USMISSION USOSCE PRIORITY 1912
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1295
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BISHKEK 000674

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SUBJECT: MAJOR GOVERNMENT SHAKEUP: OLD WINE, NEW BOTTLE

Classified By: Ambassador Marie L. Yovanovitch, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) SUMMARY: On May 10, the government announced a major personnel shakeup. As part of the reshuffling, National Security Service (SNB) Chairman Tashtemir Aitbayev as well as the Minister of Agriculture were dismissed, and State Secretary Dastan Sarygulov resigned. Both Vice Prime

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Ministers (VPM) have been reassigned, with Prime Minister Kulov's nemesis and former VPM Daniyar Usenov nominated to become the new First VPM. The shakeup is in part a gesture to the opposition, which demanded in the run-up to its April 29 demonstration the dismissal of both Sarygulov and Aitbayev. But in the long-run, the personnel changes will likely have little real effect on policy) the two new Vice Prime Ministers are longtime Bakiyev cronies, and it is uncertain what if any influence the newly-appointed officials actually have on President Bakiyev. END SUMMARY.

SHAKEUP NO REAL SURPRISE

12. (SBU) The May 10 announcement of a major government reshuffling came after weeks of rumors that just such changes were in the works. The changes were foreshadowed by the May 4 replacement of President Bakiyev's representative in Parliament Daniyar Narymbayev with Deputy Interior Minister Alymbai Sultanov.

13. (SBU) As part of the reshuffling, the unpopular SNB Chairman Tashtemir Aitbayev was sacked. Parliament had explicitly called for Aitbayev's removal in February following a scandal over the SNB's involvement with organized crime. He will be replaced by the Head of the Office of Defense and Security Policy under the Presidential Administration Busurmankul Tabaldiyev. (NOTE: Tabaldiyev also oversaw the drafting of Kyrgyzstan's Millennium Challenge Threshold Program Proposal. END NOTE). Minister of Agriculture Anarbayev was also sacked, and will be replaced by Deputy Chief of Presidential Administration, Azim Isabekov.

14. (SBU) Current First VPM Medetbek Kerimkulov was demoted to Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism (replacing

opposition figure Almaz Atambayev, who resigned from the job in protest in late April). Kerimkulov will be replaced by the controversial businessman and 2000 presidential candidate Daniyar Usenov, who served previously as Acting First VPM until November of 2005. The other Vice Prime Minister, Adakhan Madumarov, will replace Sarygulov as State Secretary.

Sarygulov, who is deeply unpopular with the opposition, resigned his post, but is rumored to be in the running for the post of Governor of Issyk-Kul Oblast. Madumarov will be replaced by current Rector of Kyrgyz National University (and former Vice Prime Minister and Education Minister) Ishengul Boljurova. The VPM and Ministers of Trade and Agriculture appointments require parliamentary approval.

PERSONNEL CHANGES PROBABLY MEAN MORE OF THE SAME

15. (C) COMMENT: Although it makes for dramatic headlines, the reshuffling will likely have little effect on policy - one group of Bakiyev cronies is being replaced by another, with the two newly appointed Vice Prime Ministers returning to the jobs they left only six months ago. The appointment of Daniyar Usenov could ratchet up tensions between President Bakiyev and Prime Minister Kulov (or signal an intention on the part of Bakiyev to increase pressure on Kulov) in that Kulov and Usenov are longtime rivals. Kulov reportedly told Bakiyev in 2005 that he wouldn't work in any government in which Usenov served. However, it is far from certain whether Usenov will even be approved by Parliament for the First VPM post) he was overwhelmingly rejected by the Parliament for the post of First VPM in November of 2005, and his popularity has not improved since then.

16. (C) More importantly, the sacking of Aitbayev and

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resignation of Sarygulov are important concessions to the opposition, and come on the heels of Bakiyev's May 3 directive to the Constitutional Reform Working group to complete three draft constitutions by August 1. Opposition leaders asked for the dismissal of both Aitbayev and Sarygulov (as well as rapid progress on constitutional reform) as part of their list of ten demands made to President Bakiyev in the run-up to the April 29 opposition demonstration. Bakiyev may also have forced Aitbayev and Sarygulov out of the government in an effort to defuse opposition plans for another major demonstration on May 27. The opposition has also demanded that Chief of Presidential Administration Usen Sydykov and Procurator General Kombaraly Kongantiyev be sacked as well. Pro-Bakiyev newspaper owner Aleksandr Kim told the Ambassador that both Kongantiyev and Sydykov will be sacked, but only after May 27 in that Bakiyev does not want to appear to be caving in to opposition demands. Daniyar Narymbayev is rumored to be the front-runner to replace Kongantiyev, in the event these personnel changes take place.
YOVANOVITCH